



Thomas Steele
Kircubbin
County Down
Northern Ireland



The herd / dairy cattle

- Specialist dairy herd
- 500 dairy cows
- Breeds: Holstein Friesian (100 %)
- 10,000 litres/cow/year
- 3.99% fat & 3.24% protein
- Intensively fully housed
- Milking three times a day
- Autumn through to Spring calving
- Average age at first calving: 23.5 months
- **Parlour:** 60 point rotary

The farm

- **Workforce:** 5 full time (5 relief milkers)
- 303 ha Agriculture area
- 200 ha Grassland
- 48.5 ha Maize
- 10.1 ha Lucerne
- 44.4 ha Wheat and Barley



Innovations

“Increasing efficiency and productivity of the herd through good attention to detail on nutrition and genetics”

- High emphasis placed on the use of technology to reduce labour.
- Fullwood rotary abreast milking parlour installed in 2009 to reduce man hours in parlour.
- Lely silage robot – used to keep feed pushed up in front of cows.
- Conductivity assessed to allow early detection of E coli and mastitis cases.
- Cows are weighed and body condition scored every milking. This information along with milk yield and stage of lactation allows Thomas to feed each cow according to its needs.
- Aim to produce best forage and diet to meet cow requirements and ensure maximum productivity.
- Use of pedometers to monitor cow activity and heat detection.
- All breeding is based on selection of bulls with good functional traits e.g. fertility, SCC, udder and leg characteristics.

Areas of interest/Aspirations

Use of technology to reduce labour and improve efficiency
Production of quality forages and diets for an intensive dairy system